Minnesota Public Interest Research Group

January 24, 2014

Fees Request for 2013 - 2014 Academic Year

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Address

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Phone Fax Email

“We acknowledge that the Fees Committee does not award actual dollars, but rather a penny fee that earns dollars based upon student enrollment levels. Any differences between anticipated and actual income resulting from changes in enrollment are the responsibility of the student organization, not of the Fees Committee.”

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Is your organization an IRS 501 (c)(3) not-for-profit? Yes X No

If yes, please provide proof of your organization’s 501(c)(3) status.

Funds are being requested for (check all that apply):

General Operating Support: X  
Start-Up Costs:  
Capital:  

Project / Program Support: X 
Technical Assistance:  
Other (List):  

Budget

Dollar Amount Requested $ 154,879.71
Total Annual Organization Budget $ 175,382.77
Total Program Budget (apart from General Operating) $ 14,320
Section 1: Narrative

MPIRG’s Mission, History & Organizational Goals

The Minnesota Public Interest Research Group (MPIRG) was founded by students at the University of Minnesota who recognized that decision makers were ignoring the responsible solutions to Minnesota’s biggest problems. Students knew then, as they do today, that the problems facing Minnesota would not be solved in the lecture hall or the library. They were eager to bridge the gap between learning about and acting on the pressing problems of the day. They came together to establish a nonprofit organization that would utilize the tools in our democratic system to create lasting change on social, environmental, and consumer rights issues – they called the group MPIRG. What ensued was a statewide student movement that put these young leaders at the forefront of solving many of the pressing social issues that face Minnesota.

MPIRG is a grassroots, student-directed, nonpartisan organization that empowers and trains students and engages the community to take collective action in the public interest statewide. A critical component from the beginning was to hire a set of experts, scientists, lawyers, and advocates to be the voice of students on the issues they care about. The MPIRG staff give students the added know-how they need in order to have a seat at the table with decision and policy makers. On campus, students hire organizers to train them how to thoroughly investigate a problem and come up with a practical solution. Students learn how to strategize around a problem, work with the media, organize the community, and take subsequent action. Through MPIRG, students get the hands-on and professional educational experience the classroom can never directly provide.

MPIRG now operates on the University of Minnesota’s campuses in the Twin Cities, Duluth, and Morris as well as at Augsburg College, Hamline University, Macalester College and St. Catherine University.

MPIRG was the first student-initiated, fees-receiving organization and the only to be established through a demonstration of majority support. In the spring of 1971, students collected over 25,000 signatures (=58% of the student body) on a petition that called for the establishment of MPIRG and stated:

“The purpose of MPIRG shall be to articulate and pursue through the media, the institutions of government, the courts, and other legal means the concerns of students on issues of general public interest. These areas will include environmental preservation, consumer protection, and the role of corporations and government agencies in the lives of the average citizen.”
MPIRG was officially incorporated as a 501(c)(4) nonprofit organization on February 17, 1971. In 2006, MPIRG changed its nonprofit tax status to a 501(c)(3) organization to better realize the organization’s mission and activities. MPIRG remains strictly nonpartisan, and has never supported a candidate for any campus, local, state, or federal office whether elected or appointed; nor has MPIRG ever excluded anyone from participation based on political ideology. Rather than define the organization by an ideology, MPIRG seeks to engage and empower students to work towards meaningful change on issues of the public interest. The underlying principle of MPIRG is that students, as citizens, should have an education that includes relevant experience in recognizing, researching, and solving problems in our society. MPIRG trains students in basic citizenship skills and specific areas of public policy. MPIRG’s program which teams passionate students with a set of professional staff has engaged thousands of U of M students in the political process and yielded an impressive list of positive changes to the University of Minnesota community and the state of Minnesota.

Selected Historical MPIRG Accomplishments at the University of Minnesota

2013 Minneapolis Municipal Election: In the fall of 2013, we conducted a youth vote campaign that resulted in record turn-out in a municipal election from precincts near campus. We directed a grassroots campaign to receive over 2,000 voter registration cards and pledges to vote in the November municipal elections. In order to educate, engage, and activate students around the new Ranked Choice Voting system and the municipal races, we hosted the second annual Voterpalooza: A Carnival for Democracy in coalition with the Minnesota Student Association where City Council candidates and Mayoral candidates alike visited with students on campus in a fun atmosphere. We also hosted a Mayoral Forum on campus where students could have their own questions answered on issues that directly affect our lives. We carried out a Get Out The Vote Campaign on November 4th and 5th when we had 1,619 conversations with students both on campus and in surrounding neighborhoods. We mailed postcard pledges back to students as a reminder with their polling place the day before the election. Turn-out in the precincts near the University doubled or tripled when compared to the 2009 municipal elections in Minneapolis.

2013 Adidas Victory: In the spring of 2013 we worked with United Students Against Sweatshops to host workers from an Indonesian Apparel factory called PT Kizone to campus. Adidas apparel was manufactured there until the factory shut down and Adidas refused to offer the required severance pay for the thousands of workers who lost their jobs. We held a meeting with the workers from PT Kizone and University Administrators who agreed to not renew contracts with Adidas to manufacture for the University if severance pay was not provided.

2012 Youth Vote Campaign: In the fall of 2012, we conducted the largest youth vote campaign on campus in U of M-Twin Cities history. We led a grassroots campaign during which we got nearly 7,000 U of M-Twin Cities students registered to vote and pledged to vote “No” on both constitutional amendments on our November 2012 ballot. The campaign entailed strategic grassroots outreach that helped us educate, engage, and mobilize thousands of students to the polls. We mailed back the pledge cards we collected with each student’s individual polling place and information for Election Day. MPIRG provided internships for 10 U of M-Twin Cities students who were trained and supervised by the Campus Organizer and learned how to execute a large-scale grassroots electoral campaign. As part of this campaign we increased our organizing on the St. Paul campus, helped draft and pass an MSA resolution opposing the Voter ID amendment, and provided volunteer opportunities for close to one
hundred U of M-Twin Cities students. Our campaign was successful not only in defeating both constitutional amendments, but also by increasing voter turnout in the precincts around U of M-Twin Cities to levels even higher than 2008. Turnout was up for the three main University of Minnesota-Twin Cities precincts: 2-4 saw an increase of 8.1 percent; 2-10 saw a 2.7 percent bump and Dinkytown’s 3-1 drew an increase of 8.3 percent.

**Minneapolis Business Recycling Ordinance:** In 2010, a student at the U of M-Twin Cities brought their concern that businesses in Minneapolis did not recycle to an MPIRG chapter meeting. MPIRG students and staff began working with the City Council and Minneapolis Chamber of Commerce to build support for a citywide ordinance putting business recycling on the books, which was approved unanimously by the City Council in the summer of 2011.

**Sexual Experiences Survey:** In the fall of 2010, MPIRG conducted a survey of students at the U of M-Twin Cities that assessed their experiences sexual and gender-based violence on campus. The results of that survey were published along with a formal report with recommendations.

**Youth Voter Engagement:** In the fall of 2008, MPIRG launched what was then the largest nonpartisan youth voter engagement campaign at the University of Minnesota. MPIRG registered over 5,500 students to vote, educated thousands more through workshops, candidate debates, and issue forums, and contacted 10,000 University students in the days leading up to the 2008 election.

**Fair Trade Resolution:** In the spring of 2008, MPIRG gathered almost 3,000 petition signatures, over 100 faculty endorsements, and almost 25 student organization endorsements supporting a resolution calling for 100% Fair Trade Certified Coffee at the U of M system schools. MPIRG was successful in passing this resolution through the University Student Senate, the Social Concerns Committee of the Faculty Senate, and the system wide University Senate.

**Fair Trade Survey:** In the fall of 2004, MPIRG conducted a survey at the University and across the state to research student opinions and knowledge on the issue of Fair Trade; the results of which were released in the spring of 2005, indicating that students are vastly in support of Fair Trade products being available for purchase on campus. MPIRG has a long tradition of helping to bring Fair Trade products to campus vendors.

**Instant Runoff Voting (IRV):** In 2004, MPIRG proposed an amendment to the MSA constitution to adopt Instant Runoff Voting, a highly representative system of balloting, as the method for electing the undergraduate President and Vice-President. Not only is IRV more representative of student preferences, it also increases participation and ensures that the winners of elections receive majority support. MPIRG students collected over 3,000 petition signatures (10% of the student body) in order to put the IRV measure on the All Campus Elections ballot. The measure passed with over 76% approval.

**University of Minnesota Apparel Code of Conduct:** In 2002, then University President Mark Yudof approved the University’s first trademark licensing code of conduct. The code came after two years of campus-wide MPIRG advocacy involving faculty, staff, and workers’ rights organizations. It requires companies, which pay the University an annual total of $500,000 in trademark fees, to adhere to strict employment standards.
U.S. Senate Forum: In 2000, MPIRG and the Minnesota Youth Vote Coalition organized the nation’s only Senate forum to include all declared candidates, with over 700 students in attendance.

U-Pass: In 2000, MPIRG worked with MSA and school administration to secure the U-Pass bus program to provide the University community with discounted bus fare. In 2005, over 17,000 students purchased U-passes and bus ridership has increased every year since inception of the U-pass program.

Recycled Newsprint: In 1990, MPIRG conducted an 8,900-signature petition drive and worked with the Minnesota Daily to switch the paper to recycled newsprint.

Radon Center: In 1989, MPIRG led the effort to create one of the three $600,000 federal Radon Training and Research Centers at the University.

Credit Union: In 1988, MPIRG helped establish and publicize for the University of Minnesota Federal Credit Union which served students, staff, and faculty.

Sexual Harassment Survey: MPIRG’s 14-page proposal in 1987 and participation in the University’s Sexual Harassment Advisory Board convinced the University to conduct a system-wide survey in 1990.

Financial Aid: Slip Sliding Away, a report on higher education and the decline of student financial aid, was written by MPIRG students and staff in 1982 and updated in 1987. Former University President C. Peter McGrath said that it was the most complete survey on Minnesota financial aid.

Sexual Violence Program: In 1986, the advocacy and research of MPIRG’s Women's Issues Task Force, including a 50-page report, resulted in the establishment of the U of M's Program Against Sexual Violence (now the Aurora Center), which now serves as a national model. As part of the organizing effort, MPIRG organized the first annual Rape-Free Zone.

Recycling Program: In 1985, the Regents adopted MPIRG’s Waste Abatement Proposal which resulted in the U of M Recycling Program, considered a national model for campus recycling. MPIRG provided initial staffing for the program and has worked to expand recycling and other waste abatement efforts.

Student Regent: In 1976, MPIRG worked to establish a student position on the Board of Regents.

Selected Statewide MPIRG Accomplishments (U of M MPIRG students worked collectively with students on other campuses across Minnesota)

2013: MPIRG works to increase voter turn-out in municipal elections statewide. We collected over 2,600 registrations and pledges to vote on our campuses across Minnesota. Of the pledges we received, MPIRG mailed over 800 postcard pledges back to voters as a reminder just before Election Day. We educated students in Minneapolis and St. Paul about Ranked Choice Voting and had over 80% of ballots cast use the ranking components of the ballot.
2012: MPIRG works in coalition to defeat two constitutional amendments on the November 2012 ballot and increase youth voter turnout in Minnesota. Statewide, we built a list of over 13,000 college students who registered to vote and pledged to vote No on the two amendments. MPIRG campuses were 6% more likely to vote No on the marriage amendment, and 11% more likely to vote No on the Voter ID amendment than non-MPIRG campuses.

2010: MPIRG works in coalition and passes “Complete Streets” legislation which requires that all new roads and bridges be built with walking, biking, and transit in mind.

2009: MPIRG works with the Healthy Legacy Coalition to make Minnesota the first state to phase out the use of Bisphenol-A (BPA), a known endocrine disruptor and carcinogen, from use in children’s products.

2007: MPIRG works with the Clean Energy MN Coalition to help pass a Renewable Electricity Standard for MN. The RES sets a requirement that a growing percentage of power generation must come from new renewable energy resources until we reach 25% by 2025. Additionally, Xcel Energy, which supplies approximately half of the electricity in the state, is required to provide 30% from renewables by 2020.

2001: MPIRG secures increases in the amount spent on energy conservation, and raises requirements for energy efficiency in publicly-funded buildings as a part of the POWER Campaign (People Organizing for Workers the Environment and Ratepayers).

1998: MPIRG successfully lobbies for allocation of $4 million to Metro Greenways and Natural Areas Project.

1990: MPIRG bans the dumping of "low-level" radioactive waste in landfills and incinerators. MPIRG helps to draft and pass the Minnesota Pollution Prevention Act to reduce toxic air emissions.

1984: MPIRG mobilizes 10,000 citizens across the state to halt the siting of a high-level radioactive waste dump in Minnesota.

1985: MPIRG establishes a statewide, toll-free Tenant/Landlord hotline.

1978: After a six year legal and legislative battle, MPIRG passes the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness Act to create the nation’s sole "paddle-only" wilderness area.

1973: MPIRG, local unions and state AFL-CIO conduct a joint study in 1972 that results in a ban of the use of asbestos, a known carcinogen, in new building construction.

**MPIRG’s work with Organizations of Like Mission**

A critical part of building strong campaigns to achieve social and environmental justice is developing diverse coalitions of organizations with common interests. MPIRG has worked and sponsored events with a plethora of student groups, campus administrative units, units of government, and community
nonprofits including the Black Student Union, Minnesota Student Association, Residential Life, MN350, the Asian-American Student Union, the Queer Student Cultural Center, the Women’s Student Activist Collective, EcoWatch, Democracy Matters, the Women’s Center, GLBTA Programming Office, the Aurora Center, Boynton Health Services, OutFront Minnesota, MN NOW, Fair Vote, the Minnesota Coalition for the Homeless, Peace Coffee, United Students Against Sweatshops, the Minneapolis City Council, the Minnesota Environmental Partnership, the Minnesota Civic Engagement Table, the Healthy Legacy Coalition, the Office of Measurement Services, the Office of First Year Programming, among many more.

Despite the vast number of organizations that share the mission of MPIRG, the fact remains that MPIRG is completely controlled by an all-student board of directors who hire a set of professional staff to work directly with them on the issues of their choosing. MPIRG is always extending this outreach and expanding its network and co-sponsorships to create even deeper bonds with the broader student organization community. MPIRG believes strong, issue-based coalitions are the only way to effectively reach a population as broad as the University of Minnesota.

Need for MPIRG within the University Community

a. Training Students as Active Citizens:

Need for Organization: In today’s world, voting is not by itself adequate to ensure that people have power in their society. Eight out of nine times the candidate with the most money wins the election in Minnesota (Center for Responsive Politics). Special interest groups spend enormous sums of money right here in Minnesota to keep health and environmental standards down and profits up. Legislators who get elected on ambitious promises are torn between making choices that benefit their constituents and raising enough money to campaign for their re-election. They hear from professional lobbyists representing the pharmaceutical, banking, and energy companies every day – how can they make decisions for the people if they hear from the general public only once every 4-6 years? Voting is not enough.

How Organization Meets Need: MPIRG works to engage and empower students as citizens in the civic process through active participation. MPIRG collectively decides on issues of concern, organizes around them, and gains a unified voice on these issues. In addition, students allocate financial resources and expertise to accomplish change on a personal, campus, local, and statewide level. Our focus on the process – how to organize, mobilize, and advocate – is about making systemic social change through civic engagement. MPIRG students are at the State Capitol, meeting with representatives, talking to experts, talking with news reporters to inform the public at-large, and working with broad coalitions to find solutions to problems on campus and in Minnesota. Students learn by doing in MPIRG and, as a result, we have one of the most successful track records on campus and throughout the state.

Through student leadership, coalition building, and grassroots organizing efforts, MPIRG helps to bridge the gap between the University and local communities. For many, MPIRG’s direct community service projects and programs are the most visible and recognizable pieces of the public interest work. From cleaning and restoring rivers, to volunteering at local homeless shelters, to registering voters and informing consumers and renters of their legal rights, it is hard to miss the thousands of students participating in these projects. As higher education evolves, involvement with the community becomes a bigger part of the overall educational experience, and MPIRG’s service program helps the university fill
their mission to serve the public. Each semester we collaborate with the U’s Community Service-Learning Center to offer opportunities for students to work on MPIRG’s campaigns to fulfill their service-learning requirement.

Organizers, students, and advocates run dozens of trainings each year as part of our training program. Annually, they lead hundreds of students in developing skills that allow students to run campaigns and win for the public. Some of the trainings are structured through our internship program, others happen as problems arise and students learn the skills they need to overcome challenges and win campaigns. Here is just a sampling of the trainings MPIRG has run in the past at the U of M:

- Developing as Student Leaders
- How to Run a Voter Registration Drive and Get Out the Vote (GOTV)
- How to Develop and Run a Local Campaign
- Developing a Message for the Media
- How to Run a Press Conference
- How to Write Letters to the Editor, Editorials, Press Releases and Press Advisories
- Grassroots Organizing – Running a Petition Drive
- How to Pick an Issue to Organize Students Around
- How to Lobby Elected Officials
- Recruitment
- How to Write a Research Report
- How to Run a Letter to the Editor Campaign
- How to Run a Training
- How to Canvass Door-to-Door
- How to Run an Educational Campaign
- How to Conduct a Professional Presentation
- How to Work and Build Relationships with Faculty & Administrators
- How to Use Social Media to Organize

b. Engaging the Entire University Community in an Elevated Level of Discourse

Need for Organization: It is common for University students to learn about the many problems that are currently affecting our society in the classroom. But rarely do we discuss how we can create solutions to these problems in the context of how college students can become actively involved in implementing those solutions. This often leaves young people feeling powerless in a complex political system. The result is disillusionment of the problems, the political system, and ultimately a disengagement altogether from active citizenship. Institutions of higher education have a responsibility to provide the necessary education, skills, and experience to future leaders of our state, country, and our world. The classroom setting provides the educational aspect and some experience, but lacks hands-on training. The future leaders from the University of Minnesota need the classroom knowledge, but to be effective leaders in the future they need hands-on experience of creating real change.

How Organization Meets Need: MPIRG goes beyond the traditional classroom learning experience by taking real world problems that students have learned about and applies them to real world discourse. Students recognize the need to have professionals in the classroom to educate them on these real world problems and students recognize the need to have professionals through entities like MPIRG to tackle
these problems and implement real world solutions through active citizenship. MPIRG’s programs are designed to engage the entire University community (students, faculty, staff, and administration) in an elevated level of dialogue, evaluation, and promotion of active change. By holding public forums, rallies, and media events, MPIRG is able to mobilize the University community to solve the many environmental, social, and consumer problems that today’s society faces.

MPIRG’s role in the University community is to invite and welcome all campus entities, but especially students, to participate in educating the campus, mobilizing public support around real solutions, and winning legislative victories at all levels of organized government. Through large scale postcard and petition drives, public forums and speakers, film showings, and media attention, MPIRG educates and engages thousands of students every semester. While every student may not have the time or motivation to become directly involved with MPIRG, thousands of students are reached through MPIRG’s diverse educational program and MPIRG’s drive to engage thousands of students in the public policy arena. We have a commitment to engaging students at all levels – from simply signing a postcard to a legislator, to lobbying and testifying at the Capitol.

c. Meeting the University’s Need for Public Engagement and Service to the Community

Need for Organization: The University’s Council on Public Engagement was formed “to incorporate public engagement as a permanent and pervasive priority in teaching, learning, and research activities throughout the University.” Public Engagement is defined as “an institutional commitment to public purposes and responsibilities intended to strengthen a democratic way of life in the rapidly changing Information Age of the 21st century.” Additionally, part of the University of Minnesota’s mission as a land grant institution is to provide public service to the community.

How Organization Meets Need: MPIRG’s current activities are already helping fulfill the University’s commitment to public engagement; we have been serving the campus community in this form for the last 43 years. MPIRG helps to meet the University’s mission of service to the community by supplementing traditional classroom education with extracurricular learning and community service to take collective action in the public interest. Students involved with MPIRG learn about the various processes citizens can use to influence public or institutional policy-making and how to effectively utilize these processes. MPIRG emphasizes the importance of collective action along with community and student support in the policy-making process. There are a variety of student organizations on campus that work on some political issues, but none are as deeply committed to the betterment of their members as citizens, team their students with a set of professional organizers and advocates, have such an extensive track record of success, and work on a strictly nonpartisan basis. We work closely with the Community Service-Learning Center to provide opportunities for students to fulfill their service-learning requirements.

d. Bridging the Gap Between Colleges and Universities Statewide

Need for Organization: Although the University provides many educational opportunities and resources to its students, it does little to organize University students with students from other colleges and universities. This creates an environment where University students are isolated from college students that share many of the same experiences and face many of the same problems.
How the Organization Meets Need: University students work with MPIRG chapters at colleges and universities across the state, which gives them valuable experience in creating change at a statewide level. Through MPIRG, students gain experience working with activists from seven MPIRG college and university chapters around the state through statewide task forces, programs, forums, rallies, legislation and internships. For example, students from all of our chapters regularly plan campaigns together at our statewide events and regular conference calls (Fall Retreat, Issues and Actions Conference, Lobby Days). MPIRG also connects University students to students on campuses that do not have an MPIRG chapter, as the organization works on projects that engage other college communities in creating solutions to problems that are not being addressed.

e. Real World Nonprofit Management:

Need for Organization: Recently, there has been much talk that America is experiencing a leadership void. This has led to concern in a number of recent nonprofit publications that a leadership deficit is coming from within the nonprofit sector. The economic crisis has made it even more difficult for students to find livable wage jobs, and the nonprofit sector has been largely unable to pay livable wages due to funding cuts. This situation is further exacerbated by the lack of experienced young professionals to fill this vacuum. Given that 10% of Minnesota’s economy is nonprofit based, students need experienced, innovative, and visionary leadership to guide these nonprofits into the future.

How Organization Meets Need: MPIRG is a statewide, nonpartisan, nonprofit organization directed entirely by students. For 43 years, we have involved tens of thousands of members that have shaped MPIRG’s agenda to focus on issues that affect students across the state. We provide experienced leadership and time-tested methods to steer this organization into the future and offer students a chance to learn through doing. It’s one thing to sit in a leadership seminar, but quite another to put values, ideals, creativity, and vision into practice on a daily basis. The State Board of Directors is the body that governs the operation of MPIRG. The Board is made up of elected representatives from each of MPIRG’s campuses in Minnesota and meets monthly throughout the year. The Board sets all organizational policies, hires staff, prioritizes issues, and makes all budget decisions. They ensure the organization continues to be an effective partner in positive social change for Minnesota’s nonprofit community. As a result, MPIRG Board members gain valuable real-life management experience that uniquely equips them for whatever challenges they might face in their future vocation. Staff train Board members on the skills of running a nonprofit including handling an organization’s finances and budget. MPIRG has a long history of training new and emerging leaders who have assumed leadership positions in many reputable organizations across the state. Former State House Minority Leader and gubernatorial candidate Matt Entenza, State Director of the Sierra Club Margaret Levin, State Senator John Marty, former Duluth City Councilor Tony Cuneo, former State Representative Phil Sterner, Executive Director of the Minnesota Council of Nonprofits Jon Pratt, and former State Senate Majority Leader Larry Pogemiller are all MPIRG Alumni.

Student Benefit Derived from MPIRG for All Students

At a time when it seems to take movie-star candidates in order to spark a broader interest in the political arena, MPIRG is tackling Minnesota’s biggest problems, creating a variety of opportunities for involvement, and providing the training, resources, and expertise necessary for students to have a real
impact on the issues of the day. There is no better way to peak interest in civic engagement than to show students that a motivated group of people can make positive changes on public policy.

Many more than those active with the MPIRG chapter receive the benefits of MPIRG’s work. MPIRG members are committed to engaging their peers at every level. Students who cannot make scheduled meetings or invest the time to work with MPIRG can find opportunities to participate in events designed to educate and foster support. Nearly every U of M student encounters MPIRG’s programs during their student career. MPIRG is constantly engaging the campus community in their work, including:

- Issue-centered events (panels, film showings, rallies and forums)
- Reaching out to students through petitions, phone calls, and letters to elected officials
- Classroom announcements
- Hosting interns for the University’s Community Service Learning classes
- Working with the Office of First Year Programming to organize issue symposiums for the incoming freshmen
- Voter Registration and Get Out the Vote efforts
- Connecting with students through social media
- Articles, Editorials, Opinion Pieces and Letters to the Editor in the MNDaily
- Face-to-face connections at MPIRG educational tables
- Organizing workshops
- Bulletin boards across campus

**Student Involvement within MPIRG**
Each year, hundreds of students get involved with MPIRG, investing time and effort to gain skills in communication, leadership, organization, policy, publicity, and research methodology. Most importantly, MPIRG members are trained in effectively identifying, organizing around, and alleviating a social injustice. This investment pays dividends both immediately and in years to come for the active MPIRG member, the campus, and the broader community.

MPIRG is constantly renewing and expanding its membership by actively reaching out to the student body at the beginning of each semester. MPIRG members conduct a rigorous new member drive that reaches thousands of students through dozens of classroom announcements, hours of tabling and clipboarding, hundreds of posters and banners, and phone calls to interested students to invite them to participate. MPIRG’s campaigns at the U of M-Twin Cities (Environment, Affordable Higher Education, Corporate Accountability, and Equality) attract students with diverse majors, such as biochemistry, graphic design, environmental science, and psychology. MPIRG gives students the opportunity to apply academic disciplines to policies, issues, and projects pertaining to civic life.

MPIRG partners with the Office of First Year Programming during Welcome Week to hold symposiums, a program that around 600 students attend. This past fall, MPIRG focused on civic engagement and the importance of participating in elections and mobilizing our peers to be educated voters. We appreciate this opportunity, in addition to the tabling events student groups are featured in, to meet our newest peers and to introduce our work so that they too can become involved. Each of our weekly chapter meetings has between 50-100 students in attendance, and our email list reaches 6,719 students each week with updates and opportunities to get involved.
Section 3: Performance Report

MPIRG evaluates its performance in both long and short-term goals.

MPIRG evaluates its degree of long-term success by reaching the following goals:

- Assist the University to fulfill its land-grant obligation to better the surrounding community
- Provide students with practical experience and leadership opportunities in nonprofit management and operation
- Engage students in organizing their peers in issue-based campaigns that develop their ability to be lifelong leaders and citizen-activists for the public interest
- Strengthen student involvement in civic life, thereby strengthening our democracy
- Achieve victories that are tangible and directly benefit the public good

Obviously, MPIRG's long-term goals, which the organization defines as its mission, are difficult to quantify through any metric, but the success is nonetheless important.

Some of MPIRG’s most notable victories (listed on pages 3, 4, and 5) highlight where MPIRG was able to dedicate student service fees with amazing results. MPIRG’s campaign successes at the University of Minnesota during the 2012/2013 academic year include:

- Defeating two constitutional amendments on the November 2012 ballot and increasing youth voter turnout in Minnesota. We built a list of over 7,000 U of M students who registered to vote and pledged to vote no on the two amendments.
- Cutting the contract with Adidas - MPIRG hosted workers from an Indonesian Apparel factory called PT Kizone to campus that manufactured University of Minnesota clothing. Adidas apparel was manufactured there until the factory shut down and Adidas refused to offer the required severance pay for the thousands of workers who lost their jobs. MPIRG members held a meeting with the workers from PT Kizone and University Administrators who agreed to not renew contracts with Adidas to manufacture for the University if severance pay was not provided.
- Drafting crucial legislation, Opportunity Minnesota, to reduce student debt, passing it through the Senate Higher Education Policy Committee and hearing it in the Senate Taxes Committee.
- Bringing transparency to crucial citywide negotiations around Minneapolis’ utilities contract. MPIRG worked in coalition to reach an agreement with CenterPoint Energy to collaborate on local energy initiatives in the City of Minneapolis, increase energy efficiency, and reduce hiring disparities and had crucial conversations at City Hall with the current electric utility provider, Xcel Energy, to bring about more clean, local, equitable, affordable, and reliable energy to the residents of Minneapolis. This campaign engaged elected officials in support of these goals through direct constituent contact from community members.
- Partnering with Affinity Plus to host a “Move Your Money Day” encouraging students to increase their financial literacy and invest in socially responsible banking options.

MPIRG evaluates its degree of short-term success by reaching the following goals:

- Involve and educate as many students and community members as possible in MPIRG’s campaigns as well as in politics in general; and to do so in a democratic, nonpartisan and open fashion
• Engage students in educational events and opportunities, and provide opportunities for students to have their voice heard by decision makers on issues they are concerned about
• Increase discourse about the issues MPIRG is working on beyond direct interactions with our group through Letters to the Editor in the Minnesota Daily (18 in fall 2012), class announcements (58 in fall 2012), and promotional work through campus and social media efforts
• Weekly attendance in chapter meetings
• Success directly engaging students in activities that support our issue work’s success, including:

**Spring 2013:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EVENT</th>
<th>STUDENTS REACHED</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Opportunity MN Petitioning</td>
<td>747 signed down</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kickoff Meeting</td>
<td>100 attended</td>
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<tr>
<td>Activities Fair</td>
<td>30 signed down</td>
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<tr>
<td>Move Your Money Day</td>
<td>58 attended</td>
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<tr>
<td>Making the Switch: A Discussion About Minnesota’s Clean Energy Future</td>
<td>100 attended</td>
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<td>Opportunity Minnesota Phone Banks</td>
<td>53 attended</td>
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<td>Opportunity Minnesota Day at the Capitol (press conference)</td>
<td>20 attended</td>
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<tr>
<td>Opportunity Minnesota Senate Higher Education Committee Hearing</td>
<td>31 attended</td>
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<tr>
<td>Opportunity Minnesota Senate Taxes Committee Hearing</td>
<td>6 attended</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environmental Youth Energy Lobby Day at the State Capitol</td>
<td>44 participated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excused Absence Presentation for U Senate</td>
<td>500+ attended</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support the U Day at the State Capitol</td>
<td>15 participated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minneapolis Energy Options Petitioning</td>
<td>112 signed down</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voting Rights Tabling</td>
<td>125 attended</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Fall 2013:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EVENT</th>
<th>STUDENTS REACHED</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Classroom Announcements for New Member Drive</td>
<td>312 signed down</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Welcome Week Events: Presentations, Explore U Fair, 5k Tour</td>
<td>705 registered/pledged</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clipboarding and Tabling for New Member Drive and Voter Registration</td>
<td>202 signed down</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall Kickoff Meeting</td>
<td>78 attended</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Engagement Fair</td>
<td>58 signed down</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voterpalooza</td>
<td>200 attended</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mayoral Candidate Forum</td>
<td>79 attended</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trick or Vote</td>
<td>200 attended</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sustainability Action!</td>
<td>398 attended</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solar Schools Press Conference</td>
<td>25 attended</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dorms/Superblock Ranked Choice Voting/Election Day Education</td>
<td>918 conversations</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2014-2015 Student Organization Student Services Fees Request
University of Minnesota – Twin Cities
Minnesota Public Interest Research Group (MPIRG)

Election Day Door Knocking – GOTV 701 conversations
Students Against Debt Coalition Meeting 10 attended
MPIRG Fall Retreat 35 attended

TOTAL STUDENTS REACHED IN 2012: 5,583

Section 4: Reserve Accounts

MPIRG currently maintains an operating reserve that is 6.8% of the overall budget request with a goal of 10%.

Section 5: Fees Request

MPIRG is requesting $154,879.71 from the University of Minnesota Twin Cities Student Service Fee Committee for fiscal year 2014-2015.

This request is an increase of $30668.71 from MPIRG’s award for fiscal year 2012/2013. Since 2012 was a major election year, our 2012-2013 budget request reflected a need to dedicate significant resources to engaging students in our state’s democracy. This year, our budget request outlines the core elements of our program that are crucial to our success as an organization at the U of M-Twin Cities campus.

Salaries, Wages, and Stipends

Students’ ability to hire professional staff to work with them on the issues they care about has been the core of MPIRG’s program for 40 years. MPIRG’s staff gives students the training and expertise they need to be effective on the issues they care about. In addition, MPIRG staff represent students in professional settings that students either do not have the professional experience to participate in or just do not have the necessary time to dedicate. MPIRG’s ability to team passionate students with professional staff has been the cornerstone of the organization’s success. It should be clearly stated that MPIRG, as do other nonprofits, considers staff time the major part of their program.

MPIRG’s core staff support for the U of M in 2014-2015 includes a full-time Campus Organizer, 30% of MPIRG’s Organizing Director, 15% of MPIRG’s Executive Director, and a full-time Diversity Fellow.

Insurance, Benefits, and Taxes

MPIRG strives to offer competitive benefits so that it can ensure U of M students can work with best available staff in the field. For the next academic year, we anticipate only a modest increase in healthcare costs and payroll taxes.

Consultants/Professional Fees
This line item covers the cost of MPIRG’s annual audit, which is required of nonprofit organizations of MPIRG’s size. As noted above, we have returned to requesting support to retain bookkeeping services from a U of M student financial manager in order to more staff time be dedicated to strong programming on campus.

**Equipment**

Our equipment line item continues to include the cost of our copier/printer, maintenance, and paper and toner.

**Other**

This line item covers the cost of MPIRG’s directors and officers insurance and our liability insurance. This is considered to be sound risk management for 501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations such as MPIRG.

**Summer Programming**

During the summer of 2014, MPIRG’s program will operate at 100% with our office open Monday through Friday from 9am – 5pm and some weekends. MPIRG will supervise student interns from the University on a variety of research, policy, advocacy and grassroots organizing projects that will continue the campaigns from the school year and enhance our ability to serve the student body for the upcoming year. Additionally, MPIRG will be working with the Office of First Year Programming to engage incoming freshmen, and laying the ground work for successful campaigns in the fall. Students who pay Student Services Fees in the summer will have the opportunity to participate in these projects, attend educational events, or attend public meetings.

MPIRG’s student service fee request for fiscal year 2014/2015 allows the organization to adequately employ innovative projects that engage even more students in the University’s mission of civic engagement.

**MPIRG’s Program Outline at the U of M for the 2014/2015 Academic Year:**

A. Student Outreach: New Member Drives  
B. Youth Vote Campaign  
C. Environment Campaign  
D. Affordable Higher Education Campaign  
E. Corporate Accountability Campaign  
F. Equality Campaign  
G. Student Legislative Program  
H. Trainings, Conferences and Additional Projects

**A. STUDENT OUTREACH: NEW MEMBER DRIVES**

Each semester, in an effort to engage as many students as possible in MPIRG's work for the year, MPIRG executes an extensive new member drive that goes well beyond the traditional methods of posters, banners, and flyers to reach out to new students. Obviously these traditional methods play a role in MPIRG's new member drive, but after 43 years of engaging students in our work, MPIRG has realized
that peer-to-peer communication, although time intensive, is the superior method to actually engage students and get them interested in our work.

This new member drive spans three weeks at the beginning of each semester where MPIRG hosts informational tables in Coffman Union, at the St. Paul Student Center, in various student housing complexes, and at each activity fair offered by Student Union and Activities. Additionally, MPIRG works with faculty representing a diversity of departments to speak to their classes and invite their students to participate in the organization’s work. Through informational tables and class presentations MPIRG reaches out to thousands of students each semester and at the conclusion of each new member drive has a list of 1,000-1,200 students interested in working with MPIRG. Each of the students on this list receives a phone call and an email from an MPIRG student inviting them to the Kickoff Meeting held at the beginning of each semester.

MPIRG’s new member drive ensures that the organization is reaching out to as many students as possible to engage them in our work. The planning and logistical execution of the new member drive is largely supervised by MPIRG staff who also conduct the skill trainings necessary for the students to be effective in engaging the largest number of students in our work.

Students reached: 6,000

B. YOUTH VOTE CAMPAIGN

MPIRG’s historical youth vote work highlights what is possible with expanded funding. In the fall of 2008, MPIRG launched what was then the largest nonpartisan youth voter engagement campaign at the University of Minnesota. MPIRG registered over 5,500 students to vote, educated thousands more through workshops, candidate debates, and issue forums, and contacted 10,000 University students in the days leading up to the 2008 election.

Then, in 2012, we reached out to thousands of U of M-Twin Cities students, helping almost 7,000 of them register to vote and pledge to vote No on two constitutional amendments that would have been harmful to students. Our campaign included time-tested methods infused with creativity to excite and engage students in elections through voter registration drives, candidate debates and forums, and extensive Get Out The Vote efforts. Just one example of our research-based tactics is our mail-back pledge card. We got students to sign postcards pledging to vote No, and then we mailed them back to the students in the days just before Election Day with a sticker indicating their individual polling location. This tactic has been proven by the Analyst Institute to increase voter turnout (which we did – the precincts around the U of M-Twin Cities saw higher turnout than 2008). This is an example of the services we provide to students when we are funded to do this work.

Since MPIRG is committed to engaging students in every election, this past fall we repeated our Get Out The Vote campaign plan for the November 2013 city and local elections. The campaign brought candidates for Mayor to campus to discuss issues relevant to student voters, educated students about the new Ranked Choice Voting system and encouraged youth participation where it has been sorely lacking in the past. In the end, it resulted in record voter turnout for Minneapolis Municipal Elections at U of M precincts. Turn-out in the precincts near the University doubled or tripled when compared to the 2009 municipal elections in Minneapolis.
At MPIRG we know how important it is to be involved at every level of our democracy, and elections for City Council can impact voters’ lives just as much, and in some cases more, than statewide and federal elections. We also know that citizens who vote in the first few elections after they turn 18 have a significantly higher likelihood of becoming lifelong voters. Therefore, we know it is worth it for us to invest in getting U of M students out to the polls on Election Day in 2014.

Youth Vote Campaign Goals

Campus: To prepare University of Minnesota – Twin Cities students to exercise their right to vote and encourage their civic participation on Election Day, November 5, 2014.

Community: To accurately reflect the student voice in the Twin Cities through our participation.

MPIRG will accomplish these goals through strategic efforts on campus, including:

1. Voter Registration Drive
Preparing voters for Election Day is a critical piece of making it easy to vote, which is exactly what being pre-registered before the big day allows. In addition, it is often a first contact with voters to remind them of the upcoming vote. MPIRG will clipboard extensively around campus, present to student groups and classes, and partner again with the U of M Library system to have registration posts at each library to make registering highly visible and easy for the campus community. MPIRG will make weekly visits to City Hall to hand-deliver the registrations until the due dates:
General Election: pre-registration ends October 15th

Target Audience: 2,000

2. Voter Education Drive
There are three basic questions voters need answered to successfully vote on Election Day:
1. Who is on the ballot  2. What to bring with to the polls  3. Where their polling location is

All of MPIRG’s educational efforts between the pre-registration period and Election Day will encompass answering these questions. We will continue clipboarding and tabling around campus with nonpartisan voting resources, door-knocking the dorms and surrounding high-density campus housing, and poll watching high student-populated precincts to ensure protection of the rights of voters.

Target Audience: 2,000

3. Candidate Panels
It’s important that candidates understand the issues students care about. MPIRG will co-sponsor panels that bring the conversation to campus. MPIRG will continue to host the annual carnival event Voterpalooza in coalition with MSA and other student groups as an opportunity for candidates to come to campus and visit with students about issues that matter most. At these events will be opportunities to register to vote and receive non-partisan information on candidates and elections.

Target Audience: 500
4. Training: Serving as an Election Judge
The average poll worker is a retired voter from the precinct; the average shift for a poll worker is 6 or 12 hours. One of the most important ways young people can engage in Election Day beyond voting is serving as an Election Judge where they can ensure a positive experience for voters. MPIRG will recruit students to be election judges, hold a training on campus for people interested in serving as an election judge to answer questions, prepare students for their first experience serving as a judge, and help in the application process for their precinct.

Target Audience: 20

5. Getting Out the Student Vote
Election Day is what all voter engagement organizing is for. The campaign builds on itself and is only effective when the students who MPIRG has educated and engaged participate. For this reason, MPIRG puts extensive work in ensuring students vote. Through thousands of phone calls in the days leading up to and on Election Day, tabling around campus with polling information and resources, door-knocking the dorms and surrounding high-density campus housing, poll watching high student-populated precincts to ensure protection of the rights of voters MPIRG can ensure students at the U of M have a high voter turnout in 2013.

MPIRG and other organizations alike have found great success in the use of text blasts, mailings, and Facebook ads to engage young voters in elections. Studies show that people need to be reminded to do something 7-14 times. This doesn’t just refer to a verbal reminder, they can be visual too. Utilizing tactics like Facebook and texting to reach students is hugely important in today’s world. MPIRG will engage students through these proven mediums once again in the months leading up to Election Day in 2014.

Target Audience: 8,500

Total Number of Students Reached: 12,520 Students

C. ENVIRONMENT AND CAMPUS SUSTAINABILITY CAMPAIGN

MPIRG’s Environment and Campus Sustainability Campaign is broad in scope, but has specific identifiable goals. We will work to increase sustainable energy practices both on and off campus and lobby for an increased Renewable Energy Standard at the Capitol.

Our Environment campaign on campus is also inclusive of a diversity of environmental issues related to recycling, increasing transportation options, clean energy, energy efficiency, sustainable agriculture, and reducing chemical exposure. The campaign will include a variety of educational events to inform University students on pressing environmental issues and related policy developments, but will also include concrete policy changes related to the issues.

On campus work will also include education against harmful garbage burning, and lobbying for research and funding devoted to increasing the University’s solar energy use.
At the state level, we will have interns monitoring environmental committees at the Capitol, lobbying for an increased Renewable Energy Standard for the state of Minnesota, and spreading awareness of the legislature’s environmental votes.

Total Students Reach: 1,000

D. AFFORDABLE HIGHER EDUCATION CAMPAIGN

MPIRG’s Affordable Higher Education Campaign is focused on making higher education more accessible to all Minnesotans and reducing the impact of our student loan debt crisis. Students in the U.S. are being crushed under over $1 trillion dollars of student loan debt, and the story is even worse in Minnesota where we have the 3rd highest average debt – almost $30,000. But we have the chance to reverse this trend with a bill called Opportunity Minnesota, which would reimburse students for the money they spend on student loan debt payments. This issue affects every college student, and MPIRG is committed to reaching out to as many students possible to make college more accessible.

Affordable Higher Education Campaign Goals

Campus: This campaign will focus on a number of educational events related to the rising cost of college tuition and exorbitant student loan debt and awareness to students, but also focus on policy solutions to these problems semester by semester. MPIRG has initiated the Students Against Debt Coalition with other student organizations as a platform for considering solutions to Higher Education affordability. At the introductory meeting of this coalition we brought in the chief author of legislation to reduce student debt, Senator Clausen, to explain his current bill, SF 997, also called Opportunity Minnesota. This is a great example of how MPIRG works to empower other student groups to propose solutions to this ongoing issue of affordability of higher education.

State Legislature: MPIRG is working to move forward with Opportunity Minnesota (SF 997), a bill that we wrote. We have two interns from U of M-Twin Cities who are leading the way on this and engaging our campus membership in the legislative process. As the bill has been heard in the Senate, interns are working to have it heard in the House. This is a great learning experience as our students are able to learn from our professional staff and sit in on high-level meetings about important legislation.

At the Capitol, our interns are monitoring the House and Senate Higher Education committees, and we will bring students to the Capitol both for two lobby days and for important committee hearings on higher education issues, including Opportunity Minnesota.

Total Students Reached: 100

E. CORPORATE ACCOUNTABILITY CAMPAIGN

MPIRG’s Corporate Accountability campaign includes fighting for some of the same consumer protection principles for which MPIRG has been advocating for over forty years. We will be running a campaign educating students about campaign finance reform, procurement, and socially and environmentally responsible investment. Young people are passionate about making sure citizens and consumers have
responsible options available to them, and to make sure their interests aren't taken advantage of. Big money also plays too large of a role in elections, and MPIRG will work for measures that make our election systems more transparent and democratic.

**Corporate Accountability Campaign Goals**

**Campus:** MPIRG will focus on policy changes that address the U’s investment in socially and environmentally irresponsible entities, work with coalition partners (MN350 and Fossil Free Minnesota), and work to continue promoting socially responsible banking options such as credit unions. We will hold a series of educational events to promote awareness of students’ banking options while they are students at the U. We will culminate our educational campaign with a statewide Move Your Money Day, encouraging students to keep their money in credit unions that do not charge excessive fees, do not work for a profit, and support our local community.

**Community:** MPIRG is exploring our options for adopting a socially and environmentally responsible procurement policy for the City of Minneapolis. This year we will be investigating the possibilities and looking to examples or models for possible implementation here.

**State Legislature:** MPIRG will continue work on campaign finance reform legislation at the Capitol by lobbying and testifying in support state legislative policies aimed at reducing the influence of special interest money in Minnesota’s election process. We are also working to help pass legislation that makes our voting more accessible, to ensure that all citizens have an equal voice, regardless of how deep their pockets are.

Total Students Reached: 500

**F. EQUALITY CAMPAIGN**

MPIRG has always worked on issues of social justice and equality. After our successful campaigns from getting sweatshop-free clothing at the U to helping defeat a freedom-limiting constitutional amendment, students are planning to remain a force in making sure our campus, community, and state are places for all people to be respected. This semester we will be working to make sure the U system’s processes are inclusive of people of all gender identities and sexual orientations and making sure opportunities at the U are available to people of all socioeconomic classes. We’re excited to partner with other organizations working on similar issues on campus and building a broad base of coordinated coalition support. Staff will help mobilize and educate students as equality issues come up at the Capitol as well.

On campus, students will continue to push for a preferred name option on class rosters. This year, MPIRG demonstrated overwhelming support for this change with 1300 petition signatures across U of M campuses. MPIRG will continue to push for this change by working alongside the registrar’s office to see it through to implementation.

MPIRG will also continue to work with the Aurora Center to expand educational workshops on campus around the issue of consent. This year, students worked to create an up-to-date educational video and put out a survey to better understand where the Aurora Center should focus their efforts. Next year, students intend to continue that partnership and implement a wider reaching program during Welcome
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Minnesota Public Interest Research Group (MPIRG)

Week.

Total Students Reached: 2,000

G. STUDENT LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM

MPIRG’s legislative program has expanded significantly in the last two years. It is crucial for us to not only engage our students on campus but also in statewide politics. Through our program, students take the issues they are passionate about, and work to see real change at the State Capitol. MPIRG staff teach and train students how to make their voice heard in professional settings. The main components of our legislative program are lobbying at the Capitol, hosting press conferences on our issues, testifying in committee, hosting in-district meetings with State House and Senate members, and providing internships for Capitol committee monitoring and advocacy.

**Lobby Days:**

Each spring semester during the state legislative session, MPIRG organizes a Lobby Day at the State Capitol. The event serves multiple purposes, including an educational experience for students to learn about the state legislative process and who their state legislators are while also providing students an opportunity to see first-hand what a committee hearing is like, or observe a House or Senate floor session. This year, instead of one issue-comprehensive lobby day, we plan to hold two lobby days, one for each of our two main legislative issues we are working on this semester. This will allow our students to lobby their legislators in a more meaningful, issue-focused way, and to be directly involved in moving a piece of legislation through the process of becoming law. These events also provide students the opportunity to connect the issues they learn about in the classroom or engage in on campus to real world public policy solutions and have their voice heard. Training materials and background papers on various pieces of legislation prepare the students for these day long events where lunch is provided to the approximately 40 students who attend. MPIRG's professional staff reserve space at the Capitol, set up meetings for the students with their state legislators, organize transportation for students to attend, arrange for policy experts to share their knowledge, provide trainings on the issues and policies, educate students on the state legislative process, and share best practices on how to lobby.

**Press Conferences:**

MPIRG hosts press conferences on our issues when they are at a crucial stage in a campaign. These press conferences provide a unique opportunity for students to gain public professional speaking experience, meet other key people on our issues and communicate with the media through writing press releases, press advisories, and being interviewed. Our students learn all the traditional and new media work that goes into planning and executing a successful press conference. We will hold several of these this semester on the U of M-Twin Cities campus and at the Capitol. This is another example of how our students learn about all the different tactics and elements of a successful campaign.

**Committee Monitoring Internships:**

MPIRG’s legislative internship program provides students with the opportunity to see the inner-workings of our state government in person and to play an integral role in the passage of legislation.
Legislative interns with MPIRG monitor committees on the issues they care about, connect with the media on legislation, testify in front of committees, learn how to use social media in a professional, advocacy context, and meet with legislators. We couple live experience at the Capitol with blog writing, new media organizing, and in-district advocacy. This session we have eight legislative interns already lined up from U of M-Twin Cities.

H. CONFERENCES, TRAININGS, AND ADDITIONAL PROJECTS

A key part of MPIRG’s mission is to develop the next generation of leaders and equip them with the skills they will need to be effective.

Conferences, Trainings, and Additional Project Goals

MPIRG will hold workshops and conferences that will educate students on the issues they are concerned with and trainings that will give them the skills to be effective citizen activists. These are the programs that we have planned for the 2014/2015 academic year with additional events being organized as needed.

Campus: MPIRG staff and leadership will host bi-monthly organizer trainings to train students in practical skills needed to run effective campaigns, including: campaign planning and timelining, power-mapping, working with the media, tabling and clipboarding, phone banking, holding a press event, and more.

Community: MPIRG will train-in students as lobbyists to facilitate semester meetings with the Mayors and City Councils of Minneapolis and Saint Paul as well as city council members to present the current issues and concerns of the students who make up their constituencies. These meetings create municipal awareness and build the relationship between the student body and municipal officials.

Precinct Caucuses: MPIRG will train and organize students to participate in their precinct caucuses. Participation in caucuses is often underrepresented and is a powerful way to participate in and influence local politics.

State Legislature: MPIRG will connect students to their legislators on organized lobby days and help students prepare testimony to share during committee hearings throughout the session. MPIRG will host in-district meetings with elected representatives and state officials.

MPIRG will accomplish these goals through strategic efforts on campus, including:

1. Navigating the Legislative Process Workshop

The navigation of the legislative process can be a confusing and daunting task. This workshop will provide a detailed training of how the process works from beginning to end. The training will include how a bill becomes a law, how to track a piece of legislation as it moves through the various levels in government and how to find representatives to support this legislation. This workshop will be open to all University students and advertised through flyers, announcements, posters, social networking sites and our listservs. It will include refreshments and resources to take home about the process.

Target Audience: 75
2. Issues and Actions Conference
At MPIRG’s annual Issues and Actions conference, students and community members have the opportunity to present various issues, campaigns, events, and legislation they think MPIRG should work on. Students who attend the conference will vote on the campaigns and foci for the coming year. Students will express their views about the future of MPIRG, as well as hear the opinions of others in an open discussion at the conference. Food and beverages will be provided. MPIRG will promote the Issues and Actions Conference to students and community members through class and student organization announcements, posters, print ads, flyers, listservs, and social network sites.

Target Attendance: 100

3. Statewide Fall Retreat
At MPIRG’s Fall Retreat, students from across the state come together and spend two days attending skill trainings in areas such as campaign planning, public speaking, research, event organizing, working with the media, volunteer recruitment and management, meeting with decision makers and meeting facilitation. U of M students also meet with students from across the state to set campaign goals, discuss campaign strategies, and figure out areas for collaboration. In addition, student leaders meet to develop and evaluate MPIRG’s organizational strategic planning process. The retreat requires meeting space as well as food and beverages for the weekend. This event is open to all students and will take place next October.

Target Attendance: 40

Total Students Reached: 215